

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2481

ANSWERED ON:05.12.2001

FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN VOICEMAIL AND AUDIO TEXT SERVICE

THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have given approval for foreign investment in Voicemail and Audio Text Service;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the right to fix charges has been given to the service provider;
- (d) if so, whether the interest of customers would be controlled by the service provider or by the Government; and
- (e) the conditions laid down by the Government for giving licence of this service and the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS(SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) List of companies to whom government has granted approval for foreign direct investment (FDI) is placed at Annexure - I. Further, as per the FDI policy, for voice mail service, upto 100% FDI is allowed on automatic basis through Reserve Bank of India, since February 2000. Details of joint ventures/foreign investment through automatic route are not centrally maintained.

(c) & (d): As per the terms and conditions of the Licence Agreement for Voice Mail Service/Auto-tex service/Unified Messaging Service, the service provider will charge the tariffs for the service as per the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) tariff orders/regulations/directions issued in this regard from time to time. The Service Provider shall also fulfill requirements regarding publication of tariffs, notifications and provision of information as directed by TRAI through its orders/regulations/directions issued from time to time as per the provisions of TRAI Act, 1997 as amended from time to time.

(e) The current Policy for grant of Voice Mail Service/Audiotex Service/Unified Messaging Service has been announced by the Government on 16th July, 2001. The salient features of the policy are enclosed in the Annexure-II

ANNEXURE-I

List of Foreign Post Direct Investment Collaboration cases approved from August 1991 to September 2001 Voice - mail and Audio - tex/ Audio Text Services

S. No.	Name of Indian Company (Rs.Lakhs) % equity	Name of Forgn Company	Amount	Service
1	Indian Telecom Pvt.Ltd.	OTC Interntnl. Ltd., Australia	100.00 (50%)	Voice Mail
2	Swarakar Telecom Pvt. Ltd	Universal Telecom. NRI	26.13 (49%)	Voice Mail, Audio Text
3	Nijholt Telecommns. BV.	Nijholt Telecommns . BV., Netherlands	2.45 (49%)	Voice Mail
4	BG Energy Holdings Ltd.	BG Energy Holdings Ltd., UK	3220.00 (100 %)	Voice mail

5 Hi-Tech Tele Access WPI Group Inc., USA 98.00(49%) Voice mail/Audiotex
Services Ltd. services

6 Converse Netwrk systems Converse Network 10.00100% Voice Mail
India Pvt.Ltd Systems Inc. USA

7 Dailnet Communications Startec Global 430.00(40.57%) Voice Mail
Limited Communications
Co., USA

8 Telephone Infmn. Telephone Information 25.00(50%) Audio Text Service
Services.(I) Ltd. Serv. Pl.c., UK

9 Bloomberg Data Bloomberg LP, USA 160.00(100%) Audio Text Service
Services (India)

Annexure-II

Salient features of policy for grant of New Licences for Voice Mail/Audiotex/Unified Messaging Service

1. The licence for operation of Voice Mail/ Audiotex/Unified Messaging Service shall be issued on non-exclusive basis.
2. The service area for the licence shall be Short Distance Charging Area (SDCA) on the basis of local dialing.The service provider would install his equipment within the SDCA for which licence is obtained.
3. There will be no Entry Fee as well as license fee.Performance Bank Guarantee of Rs. three lakhs for each licence shall be required.
4. The applicant should be registered Indian company. 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) is allowed, subject to fulfillment of other rules and conditions of the Government on FDI
5. The period of license shall be 15 years, with the provision for extending the same for another 5 years.
6. The Voice Mail/Audiotex/Unified Messaging Service Provider will be bound to provide the services to any person within the service user, without any discrimination.
7. The Licensee will charge the tariffs for the SERVICE as per the TRAI Tariff orders/ regulations / directions issued in this regard from time to time.